



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 16**

February Session, 2022

Substitute House Bill No. 5136

*House of Representatives, March 15, 2022*

The Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement reported through REP. ELLIOTT of the 88th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF HOUSING-INSECURE STUDENTS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1       Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section, (1)  
2       "housing insecurity" means the lack of security caused by high housing  
3       costs relative to income, poor housing quality, unstable neighborhoods,  
4       overcrowding or moving frequently, and (2) "public institution of  
5       higher education" means the constituent units of the state system of  
6       higher education identified in subdivisions (1) and (2) of section 10a-1  
7       of the general statutes.

8       (b) On or before January 1, 2023, the Board of Trustees of The  
9       University of Connecticut and the Board of Regents for Higher  
10      Education shall develop and adopt a policy on students at the public  
11      institutions of higher education governed by said boards who are  
12      homeless or experiencing housing insecurity. Said boards shall consult  
13      with students, faculty and staff of such institutions and local and state

14 organizations with subject matter expertise in homelessness and  
15 housing insecurity to develop such policy. Said boards shall review such  
16 policy at least annually and update such policy as deemed necessary  
17 and after considering the results of any survey administered pursuant  
18 to subsection (c) of this section.

19 (c) Not later than the start of the fall semester of 2023, and annually  
20 thereafter, each public institution of higher education shall administer a  
21 survey to each student enrolled at such institution for the purpose of  
22 collecting data on the number of students who are homeless or  
23 experiencing housing insecurity and the causes of and reasons for such  
24 homelessness or housing insecurity. Such survey shall include, but not  
25 be limited to, questions regarding a student's (1) demographic  
26 background, including age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, marital  
27 status, income, education and employment; (2) specific barriers to  
28 accessing housing; and (3) awareness or use of community or  
29 institutional resources to address homelessness and housing insecurity  
30 and any barriers to accessing such resources. Based on the results of  
31 such survey, each such institution shall amend any existing services or  
32 programs or establish new services or programs to address the needs of  
33 students who are homeless or experiencing housing insecurity.

34 (d) Each public institution of higher education in the state shall: (1)  
35 Within available appropriations, make grants or provide other financial  
36 assistance to students of the institution who are homeless or  
37 experiencing housing insecurity to be used for housing costs at times  
38 when classes are in session at the institution; (2) within available  
39 appropriations, make grants or provide other financial assistance to  
40 such students to be used for housing costs at times when the institution  
41 is closed for a period of more than seven days; (3) establish a team  
42 comprised of students, faculty and staff of the institution that is  
43 responsible for working with and supporting students of the institution  
44 who are homeless or experiencing housing insecurity and provide  
45 information regarding appropriate housing and mental health resources  
46 for such students upon graduation; (4) employ a staff member who  
47 serves as a liaison for the institution and whose duties include

48 identifying appropriate housing and mental health resources available  
 49 to such students and using trauma-informed practices to mentor such  
 50 students; (5) employ a staff member, in addition to the staff member  
 51 employed pursuant to subdivision (4) of this subsection, who serves as  
 52 a liaison for the institution for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and  
 53 queer students of the institution who are homeless or experiencing  
 54 housing insecurity; (6) provide trainings on trauma-informed practices  
 55 to enable faculty and staff of the institution to more adequately respond  
 56 to students of the institution who are homeless or experiencing housing  
 57 insecurity; and (7) provide or offer financial assistance for such students  
 58 to receive medical care and mental health counseling to address issues  
 59 surrounding homelessness or housing insecurity.

60 (e) Not later than February 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, the Board  
 61 of Trustees of The University of Connecticut and the Board of Regents  
 62 for Higher Education shall submit, in accordance with the provisions of  
 63 section 11-4a of the general statutes, the policy adopted pursuant to the  
 64 provisions of subsection (b) of this section and a report on the status of  
 65 the implementation of the provisions of subsection (d) of this section to  
 66 the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having  
 67 cognizance of matters relating to higher education.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section

**HED**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

## **OFA Fiscal Note**

### **State Impact:**

<b>Agency Affected</b>	<b>Fund-Effect</b>	<b>FY 23 \$</b>	<b>FY 24 \$</b>
Board of Regents for Higher Education	Various - Cost	3.9 million	See below
Board of Regents for Higher Education	Various - Cost	Potential Significant	Potential Significant
UConn	Various - Cost	230,105	230,105
UConn	Various - Cost	Potential Significant	Potential Significant

Note: Various=Various

### **Municipal Impact:** None

### **Explanation**

The bill requires public colleges and universities to employ liaisons for and offer financial assistance to housing insecure students, among other requirements. The liaison requirement is anticipated to result in an estimated cost to the constituent units of \$4.1 million in FY 23 and potentially less in FY 24, with costs mainly falling to the Board of Regents institutions. The financial assistance requirement is a constituent unit cost that is potentially significant, also beginning in FY 23.

**Liaisons.** The bill's requirement for each public higher education institution to employ two staff members as liaisons to housing insecure and homeless students results in an estimated cost of approximately \$4.1 million in FY 23 for a total of 36 personnel. The personnel cost to the Board of Regents is approximately \$3.9 million in FY 23, composed of: (1) total salary costs of \$1,958,536 for 34 liaisons with a starting salary

of \$57,604, and (2) fringe benefits costs of \$1,953,248.<sup>1</sup> Most of the costs will fall to the community colleges (approximately \$2.8 million) as there are 12 such institutions. The community colleges' costs may fall in FY 24 to the level associated with two liaisons (\$230,105) provided the consolidation of the colleges into a single institution is fully implemented on schedule. This would lower the total Board of Regents' liaison costs in FY 24 to approximately \$1.4 million.

The anticipated personnel cost to the University of Connecticut is \$230,105 in FY 23, composed of (1) salary costs of \$115,208 for two liaisons at the same starting salary, and (2) fringe benefits costs of \$114,897.

These increased personnel costs may be funded by either the General Fund or other constituent unit revenues (e.g., tuition). If the new positions are funded through the General Fund, then the fringe benefits costs will be incurred within the Office of the State Comptroller.

**Financial assistance.** The costs associated with the bill's requirement of providing grants or other financial assistance to housing insecure or homeless students may be significant, depending on whether assistance is provided to all such students and the extent of the assistance.

If funding is provided to every housing insecure or homeless student who needs assistance, the anticipated total cost to the Board of Regents may range from approximately \$2.1 million to more than \$40 million, while UConn's estimated total cost may vary between approximately \$791,000 and \$17 million. The actual costs will depend on the amount of resources dedicated to the assistance, number of students who seek assistance, the number of students eligible under the parameters determined by each institution or governing board, and the level of

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<sup>1</sup> The fringe benefit costs for employees funded out of other appropriated funds are budgeted within the fringe benefit account of those funds, as opposed to the fringe benefit accounts within the Office of the State Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes for other appropriated fund employees is 99.73% of payroll in FY 23.

assistance sought by students.

The estimated costs for funding every housing insecure or homeless student who needs assistance are based on: (1) fall 2021 headcount enrollment at each Board of Regents component and UConn; (2) national data indicating that two percent of four-year college/university students and three percent of community college students self-identified as homeless in 2020,<sup>2</sup> used for the minimum cost estimate; and (3) national data estimating that 43 percent of four-year students and 52 percent of community college students experienced any housing insecurity in 2020, used for the maximum cost estimate. The estimates assume that each student experiencing either homelessness (for the minimum cost) or housing insecurity (for the maximum cost) will be provided with financial assistance that averages one month's rent for a one-bedroom unit.<sup>3</sup> Some students may need less assistance, and others more. The estimates also assume that the national data apply specifically to Connecticut's constituent unit students.

### ***The Out Years***

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation in personnel and housing rental costs, as well as changes in enrollment and housing insecurity among constituent unit students.

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<sup>2</sup> The Hope Center, "#REALCOLLEGE 2021: Basic Needs Insecurity During the Ongoing Pandemic," March 2021. <https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/RCReport2021.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> The rental rates used are \$1,262 for the community colleges and Charter Oak State College, \$1,260 for the Connecticut state universities within BOR, and \$1,230 for UConn. The community college and state universities rates are the weighted (for enrollment) average of the Department of Housing-Rental Assistance Program's Maximum Allowable Rent (MAR) for March 2021 (the most recent date available) in the towns that host the institutions. For UConn, the MAR for its main host town, Mansfield, is used.

**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 5136*****AN ACT ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF HOUSING-INSECURE STUDENTS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.*****SUMMARY**

This bill establishes various requirements to assess and address housing insecurity for the state's public college and university students. It defines "housing insecurity" as the lack of security caused by high housing costs relative to income, poor housing quality, unstable neighborhoods, overcrowding, or moving frequently.

Specifically, the bill requires public colleges and universities to do the following:

1. starting by the fall 2023 semester, annually administer a survey to enrolled students to collect data on the number of students who are homeless or experiencing housing insecurity;
2. based on the survey results, amend existing services or programs or establish new services or programs to address the needs of these students;
3. within available appropriations, provide grants or other financial assistance to these students to use for housing costs when (a) classes are in session and (b) the institution is closed for more than seven days; and
4. provide additional resources and supports to these students, including, among other things, financial assistance for related medical care and mental health counseling and a support team of students, faculty, and staff.

Additionally, the bill requires the Board of Regents for Higher

Education (BOR) and the UConn Board of Trustees (BOT), by January 1, 2023, to develop and adopt a policy on students who are homeless or experiencing housing insecurity. When doing so, the boards must consult with students, institutional staff and faculty, and local and state organizations with subject matter expertise in homelessness and housing insecurity. The boards must also annually review and update the policy as they deem necessary and after considering survey results.

Lastly, the bill requires BOR and BOT, starting by February 1, 2023, to annually report to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee on the (1) adopted policy on student homelessness and housing security and (2) status of implementing the services and resources required under the bill.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

### **HOUSING INSECURITY SURVEY**

Under the bill, each public college and university must annually administer, starting by the fall 2023 semester, a survey to enrolled students to collect data on the number of students who are homeless or experiencing housing insecurity and the associated causes and reasons.

Specifically, the survey must include questions about a student's (1) demographic background, including age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, marital status, income, education, and employment; (2) specific barriers to housing access; and (3) awareness or use of community or institutional resources to address homelessness and housing insecurity and barriers to accessing these resources.

### **ADDITIONAL STUDENT RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS**

The bill requires each public higher education institution to:

1. (a) establish a team of students and institutional staff and faculty that is responsible for working with and supporting students who are homeless or experiencing housing insecurity, and (b) provide them with information about appropriate housing and mental health resources upon graduation;



2. employ a staff member who serves as a liaison for the institution and whose duties include identifying appropriate housing and mental health resources available to these students and using trauma-informed practices to mentor them;
3. employ an additional staff member to serve as a liaison for the institution's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students who are homeless or experiencing housing insecurity;
4. provide trainings on trauma-informed practices to enable the institution's staff and faculty to more adequately respond to students who are homeless or experiencing housing insecurity; and
5. provide or offer financial assistance for students to receive medical care and mental health counseling to address issues surrounding their homelessness or housing insecurity.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea    20    Nay   3    (03/03/2022)